

POSSIBLE CHANGES TO REGULATIONS FOR BLUE CRABS

These are housekeeping changes.

- 1) Correct inconsistency relating to the use of recreational gear.

Discussion: Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 08.02.03.09 Section A says that individuals with a crabbing license may use all recreational gear, meaning an individual may use trotlines and collapsible traps at the same time. Section B says that an individual with a crabbing boat license cannot use the gear at the same time. It is the Department's intention that anyone with a crabbing license (individual or boat) may use all of the gear simultaneously. The regulation proposal will fix the inconsistency.

- 2) Remove Female Closure Period

Discussion: The crab regulation lists several time periods when a harvester may not harvest female hard crabs. The commercial female crab daily catch limit is determined by license type, based on the abundance target and published by public notice. Therefore, having a closure in regulation is confusing and unnecessary.

- 3) Clarify the meaning of who cannot catch crabs on a declared day off.

Discussion — Harvesters who declare a day off cannot set or retrieve 'their' gear or catch crabs using 'their' license. Currently, the regulation prohibits a harvester from working on the water on their day off. The regulation needs to be clarified to mean 'their' license, gear and vessel. The harvester can mate or be an authorized user for someone else.

Scoped at the Sport Fisheries Advisory Commission and Tidal Fisheries Advisory Commission meetings in October 2016